

Suggested Talking Points
USAID/Philippines Mission Director Jon D. Lindborg
GEM-3 Office Inauguration
Lanang, Davao City
May 19, 2008

**Honorable OPAPP Secretary Jesus Dureza,
MEDCo Executive Director Janet Lopez and staff,
Dr. Charles Feibel and the GEM Team,
Colleagues from the U.S. Government,
Partners from the private sector,
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Mabuhay!

- This marks a special moment in the history of partnership between the United States and Philippine Governments in improving the lives of the people in Mindanao, and I'm proud to represent USAID and share this moment with you.
- As most of you know, the GEM Program has been USAID's "flagship" activity in Mindanao since 1996. Under the first and second phases of the GEM Program, the U.S. Government has undertaken substantial efforts to improve the business climate in Mindanao, facilitate investment, provide infrastructure, school computerization and governance improvement projects, and assist former MNLF combatants reintegrate into society. We have just started to implement the third phase of the GEM Program. It remains focused in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao and builds upon our shared achievements.

- The third phase of the GEM Program is a particularly special one as it now under the new bilateral Mindanao Peace and Development (MPAD) Assistance Agreement between our two countries, which we signed last fall. MPAD demonstrates our continued commitment to accelerating economic development and reducing conflict in Mindanao.
- I am confident that this new program office will further strengthen our mutual efforts at bringing peace and prosperity in Mindanao.
- Once again, welcome every one and congratulations GEM Team on your new office!